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SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY CONDITIONED
UPON THE MISSIONARY WORK.

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CONDITIONED UPON THE MISSIONARY WORK.

A

S E R M O N

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BY

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S E R M O N .

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”—MATTHEW xxviii. 18–20.

THIS is the crowning utterance of our Lord Jesus Christ. The *time*, the *circumstances*, the *significance* of it, exalt it to the glowing summit of those “exceeding great and precious promises,” by which we become “partakers of the Divine nature.”

The *time* was that fullness of ages

“Which kings and prophets waited for,
But died without the sight;”

that trembling moment in the history of man, when redemption was to be declared complete; when the Saviour of the world was to be crowned victorious over sin, death, and the devil, and to enter heaven as a conqueror. In all the experience of Adam’s race, there has not been another such a moment.

The *circumstances* were befitting the occasion. The main body of Christ’s disciples had assembled, by his appointment, for a final and transcendent interview. After his resurrection our Lord had appeared to the two Marys—“last at the cross and earliest at the sepulchre”—and addressed them, in hurried accents: “Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they

go before me into Galilee." Indeed, the angels, seen in the abandoned tomb of Joseph, had said the same before, with even more hurried accents: "Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold! he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo! I have told you." Before he fulfilled this appointment, our Lord had appeared many times to individuals—at Jerusalem, on the way to Emmaus, on the shore of Tiberias, and elsewhere. But there was something *pre-eminent* in this Epiphany, worthy of everlasting remembrance and dutiful regard by the whole Church. The forty days of his sojourn on earth, after his passion, were now wasting away. His followers had gathered in Galilee to meet the great appointment of the risen Lord. It was upon a mountain; but *which* and *where* none of the eye-witnesses have undertaken to tell us. The scene would demand room and seclusion, as the Transfiguration did, and there is no incongruity in assuming the same location. Upon the matchless Tabor, therefore—their eyes sweeping at a glance the scenes immortalized by our Saviour's life and labors—let us contemplate the assembled Church, standing around their ascending Lord for the last time on earth, and receiving his farewell charge: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all, things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

No such words ever fell upon mortal ears before nor since; no such assemblage ever trod this earth's surface since time began; nor shall, till that same Jesus cometh again in the clouds of heaven. Never could language be rendered more solemnly impressive by external circumstances. The glorious Saviour trembling between two worlds, the visible link, binding this mortal to that immortal life beyond; after death, yet still in the body, still burning with deathless sympathy, seeking

one more interview on earth, that he might repeat, in the hearing of the whole Church, the sublime missionary command already given in private to the Apostles, on the very day of the Resurrection: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The *significance* of this great command it has been the effort of the Church for eighteen centuries to educe and actualize. It contains, first of all, a sublime assumption of full Divinity, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The possession of omnipotence could not be more concisely stated. By virtue of this power, I commission you to go out and recover a lost world to God and happiness: you, Apostles, first of all. The eleven had been commissioned before (Mark xvi. 15) but now, in the presence of the whole Church, this commission is repeated with a solemn emphasis. But others are now included. The vast assembly surrounding the Apostles, the "five hundred brethren at once"—all invited, as distinctly as the "eleven"—give a peculiar direction and application to the words, "Go ye therefore, and disciple the nations." The responsibility was rolled upon the *Church*, "evangelists, elders and deacons," as well as upon the Apostles. All that constituted the "body of Christ, and members in particular"—Apostles, Prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts, helps, governments—the whole body of the discipleship was plainly addressed, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations."

The work of missions does not rest exclusively upon the ministry. Neither can it be inferred from the command that they only are to "go." "Tell his disciples *and* Peter," relates the exact Evangelist Mark, "that he goeth before you into Galilee." To his disciples *AND* the Apostles, without a question, the command was addressed, "go," do this great work. The whole Church are solemnly commissioned, by the ascending Saviour, to engage in the grand life-work of evangelizing the nations.

They were to do *three* things:

1. "Teach all nations;" μαθήτευσατε—make disciples of—convert to the faith as it is in Jesus.

2. "Baptizing them." Henceforth Baptism, instead of Circumcision, is to be the outward rite of initiation. Baptism had heretofore been applied to Pagan proselytes, signifying the washing away of the defilements of Paganism; but they were also circumcised. Henceforth it should suffice to baptize them only in the name of the Trinity.

3. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Here is employed a very different word from that rendered *to teach*, in the first member of the sentence, διδάσκοντες—as believers and members of the Church *indoctrinate* them: instruct them in the usage and duties of our holy religion. "And, lo! I am with you alway. even unto the end of the world." The *relation* of this promise to the precepts which antecede it cannot be mistaken. It is clearly *conditioned upon obedience* to those precepts. As if he had said while you are doing this evangelical work, count on my presence and help till the final consummation. Whatever other experience of believers may claim, the special presence of Christ, the great missionary promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—is pledged especially to those who are discipling the nations—πάντα τὰ ἔθνη—"all' the nations," especially Pagans. The usage of Scripture is decisive on this point. By the Gentiles, Jewish writers meant especially those who were ignorant of Jehovah and opposers of the true religion.

In a loose sense, the Hebrew word גִּוִּים, was applied to all communities and nations not under the law; but accurately it was "the heathen our enemies" (Neh. v. 9), the barbarous Tartars about the River Chebar (Ezek. iv. 13), and the profane Samaritans, who so opposed the re-establishment of Judaism after the captivity.

In the New Testament, in like manner, τὰ ἔθνη critically conveys the idea of *godless* and *wicked* nations. The term is ap-

plied to the executioners of our Lord, "And they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles" (Mark x. 33). Against him, "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, were gathered together" (Acts iv. 27). The promise made to Saul of Tarsus from out that overshadowing brightness which prostrated him on the earth, was, "I will deliver thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee" (Acts xxvi. 17).

It was to those poor, ignorant, hostile Gentiles especially that the Church was solemnly commissioned to bear the Gospel message. Among them the primitive disciples were chiefly to labor and achieve their triumphs. And only when doing so could they fairly appropriate the stupendous promise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

We are called upon to consider *two points*:

FIRST—The *blessing* contained in that pledged Presence, "Lo! I am with you."

SECOND—The *condition* on which the promise rests, *viz.*: that the Church go forth and make disciples of all nations, especially heathen nations.

I. Let us develop the meaning of the promise, "Lo! I am with you alway." The language had a significance in Jewish ears, which it has not in ours.

The Church from the days of Abraham had been under the care of a special providence. The patriarchs were not common men. Their career was divinely guided. They led a charmed life. Peace dwelt in their tents. The angels of God encamped around "their rising and their rest," and crowned their whole land with sacredness and joy.

That special providence was continued to the children of the Exode. It was made *vivid* by a stupendous symbol—the well-known "pillar of cloud by day, and fire by night." This over-shadowing Presence was their sun and shield; directing their marches, defending their encampments, and wielding the two-edged sword of divine justice. It

was the recognized dwelling among them of their Covenant God.

The threatened withdrawal of that protecting Presence, filled Moses with alarm and horror: "If thy presence go *not* with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that *thou goest with us?*" This spiritual Presence and Companionship was the glory of ancient Israel. While they were obedient their whole land was shadowed by the Almighty wing. Their hill-sides were hallowed by angelic footsteps, and their rest guarded by watch-fires of unquenchable flame. This extraordinary Providence made Israel a "peculiar people;" his land a "holy land;" and his history worthy of universal remembrance and study.

How full of meaning to such a people was the pledge of the demonstrated Messiah, "Lo! I am with you alway!"

This was the identical blessing promised to the pious Jews, in nearly the same words: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." The *one* of these pledges is co-extensive with the *other*. That stupendous national life, therefore marked by miracles, which so signalized ancient Israel, is but the providential demonstration of our missionary promise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Israel forfeited the blessing, by unbelief and disobedience; but it shall remain with the Church of the Messiah for ever. The "sceptre departed from Judah," but it has been grasped by another hand, even His to whom it belonged, and he shall reign for ever and ever, "The kingdoms of this world are the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

His care of his Church is just as real, minute, and tender, as it ever was of "Israel, his inheritance." All the promises ever made to Israel may be appropriated by that Church—are actually fulfilled in her current experience. No Red Sea may open before the embarrassed tribes of our modern Israel; but what unlooked-for paths through deep waters—what calm

transits through stormy troubles have evoked the songs of our Christian Miriams, all along the Gospel dispensation? Hailstones have not fallen from heaven and crushed our moral opponents; but the blows of sound logic, heavier than hail; the startling changes of Providence, swifter than a thunder-gust, have swayed the minds of hostile men—chased them from the field, or changed them from enemies to friends. Pestilence, like an angel of darkness, has not withered our Gospel foes, as it cut down Sennacherib's army before the gates of trembling Jerusalem; but the Holy Spirit has often made the appeals to reason and gratitude, hope and fear, smiting and transforming as that sword of the Lord against Israel's enemies. No fiery bolt may now flash from the Shekinah, to warn offending church members, or hold their enemies in check; but a swift piercing conviction often assails the heart, before which the stout will yields, and the bold transgressor is conquered. The fierce passions of Pagan idolaters are calmed, as visibly as the lions' mouths were shut in Daniel's prison-den. The cold, corrupt hearts of dead sinners have throbbed, and lived, and leaped for joy, as contrary to nature as Lazarus' emergence from the burial-cave in Bethany. Round her imperiled mountains have been found protecting forces, real and effective, as the "horses and chariots of fire" about the Prophet Elisha.

The promise has been gloriously fulfilled. Christ is with his Church always, to protect and guide it. He is with every member of it, who maintains a holy "walk with God;" giving his angels charge concerning him, and guiding the universe for his welfare.

Not a moment of all our lives has the Saviour been absent from us, or forgetful of our highest welfare. Not a moment, while time continues or immortality endures, will he forget or forsake his people. To the last, worst moment of their want or fear, he will be true to his promise: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." His countless in-

terpositions and quenchless life in the Church are *pledges* that he will never desert his people.

This promise is fulfilled also in the spiritual experience of every believer, and in the quickened ordinances of the Church. Christ is present by his Spirit, in every believing heart. That Spirit, admitted as a guide, obeyed as a teacher, cherished as a companion, inaugurates a new life. Christ is "formed within us, the hope of glory." He is our life, he dwells in our hearts by faith. It is his Spirit that giveth us life. He is with us, according to his promise, as the power of a holy service, in all our sanctified feelings and pious activities.

He is present in our Christian assemblies, kindling the quenched sensibilities, commanding the wayward will, and sealing the soul unto the day of redemption. Our sacred ordinances become instinct with the life of God; our worship becomes vivid and affecting as the incense curling above the golden altar. The word comes with authority and power, such as clothed the responses of the holy of holies, or as rolled in thunder-tones from a blazing Sinai. Our Christian walk and conversation glow and burn like that of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, as Christ went with them. Our life becomes earnest and faithful, like that of our Lord's companions, when his love burned within them and his zeal inspired their breasts.

Christ is present in all his authorized ordinances, to animate and strengthen believers, to convict and convert sinners. This is our only hope. Without a quickening power from above marking the presence of Christ, the Church withers, the Word becomes inert, ordinances are worthless and life departs.

"Hosannahs languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies."

We cry out, with shocked and disheartened Moses, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence."

But where Christ is all this is changed. There is life and power; all things flash and move and sweep onward. The Church, blessed with His presence, will be *alive*; “changing time and seasons,” disturbing dead abominations, and melting the ghostly frost-work of nature’s night and winter. It brings the spring-time in the moral world. Old ice-bridges are cracked, upheaved and tumbled together, buried out of sight. The sleeping-ground is disturbed, plowed over, perchance *burned over* and harrowed to powder, preparatory to a better crop. “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.” There is to be a new and wondrous growth, and all the breaking-up subjugation and destruction, preparatory to that growth, will surely take place. The reign of death ends, the era of life commences as Christ approaches. That life in the Church is to be permanent. Old things pass away for ever. These new growths fade not into the “sere and yellow leaf.” Grace knows no autumn, save a serene and fruitful old age. The tree planted by the River of Life, brings forth perpetual fruit. Its “leaf does not wither.” Ere the winter-time it is transplanted to an immortal realm, where blighting frost and sad decay never come. The grand characteristic of Christ’s presence will be *life—sacred, powerful, triumphant life!*

How may this life be secured? We are now prepared to consider—

II. The *condition* on which this presence of Christ is promised, viz.: That the Church will go forth and disciple all nations, especially Pagan nations. The language itself is explicit. The promise of His personal presence is added, as an encouragement in this very work: “Go, disciple all nations.” The achievement was gigantic, the obstacles mighty, and the means at the disposal of the infant Church fearfully inadequate. Hence, adds the sympathizing Saviour, as the only hope of success on their part, “I will be with you.” Other spheres and duties might be blessed with that Presence; but the pledge in all its fullness, was limited to one work, conditioned

upon one line of obedience. "Go and do this thing, and I will be with you." The missionary laborer treads the inner circle of this glowing promise; bathes in the deep noontide of the Divine manifestation. The Apostles and first missionaries would entertain the most exalted conceptions of what they were to expect, from our Lord's pledge. The value of his presence and companionship they had *tested* in many a dark hour, while he was with them in the flesh. Once, at the close of a weary day, they sought retirement by crossing the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord fell asleep on a pillow. Suddenly that fickle sea was swept by a furious tempest, which threatened to engulf them all. The sharp cries of the fearful disciples, "Lord, save us, we perish," awakened the Master, and his omnipotent words, "Peace, be still," calmed the vexed waters to a repose sweet as their Lord's upon his undisturbed "pillow, in the hinder part of the ship."

Once again, on that same sea, they were rowing in the teeth of another gale more terrible than this. Jesus was not with them. They despaired of reaching the land. All night they had buffeted manfully that mad hurricane. But now, in the morning-watch, when almost exhausted, lo! Jesus appears to them, walking on the water! The moment *his* feet touched the tossing vessel, behold! "the winds ceased, and immediately they were at the land whither they went."

Afterward, at Bethany, a noble family was overwhelmed by the death of a brother. A wild and fearful wail of anguish burst from the dark dwelling and swelled on the countless tongues of sympathizing friends. But the arrival of Jesus hushed that wild grief, and restored that lost brother, recovered from corruption and the worm.

Always Christ's presence had been the sunshine of their lives, and a shield against all possible evils. Oh! if *he* should be with them they could venture to attempt the conquest of the nations. A few unlettered fishermen and poor peasants would need a strong assurance, before they could hope to

subdue the world to the obedience of the faith. Our Lord would not impose a task so hard, without adequate support and resources for its accomplishment. That fitness and furniture were pledged in His own constant presence. It would be infallible and all-sufficient. Before his quickening Spirit, boisterous passions should crouch into calmness, quickly as the foaming waters of Gennesaret, and the imperiled workers would find a safe harbor. His presence would tinge with brightness the darkest cloud of sorrow, and change a wail of despair into a shout of victory, even at the mouth of the sepulchre!

The first disciples must have had sublime conceptions of what the promise meant—"Lo! I am with you alway." Their conduct shows what application they gave it. They "went everywhere, preaching the word." Every one that "heard, said, Come." Every disciple became an active "laborer together with God." They were in a hurry to go into all the world. They did not believe the promise would be fulfilled, while they were disobedient or inactive. They could not forget the awful providential illustrations afforded to their fathers. The sin at Sinai had forfeited to Israel the Divine protection and blessing. But for the entreaty of Moses they had perished on the spot. Their cowardice and treachery, on the border of the Promised Land, turned them back to an aimless error and slow mortality, which laid every adult among them in a desert grave. God's blessing was always conditioned upon obedience. So they would understand the promise—so all subsequent generations have found it.

As a matter of fact, this promise has been fulfilled in the Church at large only when she has obeyed the command, "Go teach all nations." The half century immediately succeeding the day of Pentecost was undoubtedly the most fruitful, powerful and glorious in the history of Christianity. The Apostles did grandly endeavor to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." They seemed in

haste, as if the time was short. The whole Church co-operated and "brought them on their way." They "laid their possessions at the Apostle's feet." They, with their united prayers, opened their prison-doors and delivered them from "deaths oft." They exemplified their impassioned preaching with their holy lives and heroic deaths. It was the triumphant time with Christianity—the type and pledge of all its triumphs.

In smaller circles and more private experience, the fulfillment of this promise has been equally satisfactory. Whenever and wherever any Church or individuals have taken up these labors of the Apostles, similar results have followed. Christ has been with them. Their own characters have glowed with the beauty of an angel. Mighty works have sprung into being, and reared their monuments along their path. Peace at home and conquests abroad have crowned their zeal with perpetual triumph. The particular congregation which has been most devoted to the world's conversion has been most blessed in all their private ordinances and enjoyments. Churches interested in missions are *spiritual* churches all Christendom over! The Sabbath-school which embodies most of this spirit, which devotes itself to the poor and neglected children of the parish, is always most prosperous and most blessed in its effects upon its own offspring. Christ is with them, and the Gospel has a flavor and power which the exclusive and selfish never know.

The soul that waters others is watered also himself. Whatever the sphere of his ministrations, if he endeavor to make disciples of others, his own hope burns brightly; his own fruitfulness is ripe and abundant.

The reflex influence of sincere evangelism is the most wondrous thing about it. It is the seal and authentication of the Divine Presence which accompanies it. This indirect blessing may be the chiefest good about the service. It never fails. It is sure and speedy. Whatever disappointment the mis-

sionary may encounter on the foreign field, he has poured a rich boon into his own bosom, which no failure can touch. The money which your hands put into the Lord's treasury will be the seed of new peace and joy in your own soul, whatever be the destiny of the expenditure abroad. Charity is twice blessed. It blesses him who receives it, and doubly blesses him who gives. This broad fact of Christian experience is the providential confirmation of the promise, "Lo! I am with you alway," whenever you imitate my work and sacrifice. This is the deep secret of all missionary success. The spirit of missions is the real spirit of Christ. When the ascending Lord bade the assembled Church "Go and do these evangelical works," he only commanded them to follow his footsteps. He came to our world on an unmatched mission of love. That same love must be the main-spring of our obedience. Just as truly as Paul, we are "debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise." In the behalf of Christ, we are to communicate his dying love to lost men. We are to carry it to them and urge it upon their acceptance; even as He "came down from heaven, *not* to be ministered unto but to minister." The Gospel is essentially missionary in its principles and precepts; in its spirit and inspired examples. Its *foundation* is love, inspired by suffering and danger. Its great *command*, "Go to the lost and press the motives of redemption upon them," even as God became man, and worked out the great salvation in the midst of human frailties and infirmities. Its *spirit* is one of holy devotion to other's good. Its brightest *lights* and best *examples* sparkle with missionary zeal, and burn with benevolence, as a consuming fire. The true type of Christianity undoubtedly is found in the missionary age and achievements. Certainly the missionary work is our only defense against the encroachments of the world, and the baleful reign of selfishness. Our piety demands some such unworldly work and sacrifice to save it from utter carnality.

We want a protest, sharp and vivid, against the despotism of sense and fashion and manifold sin. The world is falling into scepticism for want of attractive goodness, the power of a holy sacrifice and the blazing light of disinterested love. The missionary work, more than any other now attempted by the Church, demands and inspires such sacrifice. The tenderest ties of home and kindred are deliberately severed. The distasteful fellowship of heathen ignorance and pollution is freely welcomed. Yea, even the swift martyrdom to deadly malaria is braved and gloried in for religious considerations alone. Such sublime sacrifice startles the self-indulging Church with the presence of a Spirit which is not of earth. The impulsive power of a new conviction; the magnetism of Messianic love silently penetrates and transforms the whole body of believers. Old sceptical habits of thought melt off, and nobler aspirations exalt and spiritualize the Church.

In the missionary work we find the true remedy for *sectarianism* and every species of *exclusiveness*. Face to face with dying heathen, our differences fade away; our bigotry is rebuked, and becomes contemptible. We exalt what is essential to Christianity. We bring into prominence what we all hold in common, and mutual sympathy and brotherly love burst into a blaze.

This whole unworldly work naturally fellowships the spirit of our Lord. He was a missionary, and we find sympathy with him only when walking in his footsteps. The natural link of connection between the Christian laborer and his exalted Lord, is this very "discipling of the nations." We are doing His work—walking in his footsteps, and obeying his most solemn command. He will fulfill his promise, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

But, *disobey* that command; quench your sympathies for the perishing heathen, and recall your missionaries, and no man can have any assurance that Christ will be with us. I fear greatly that the "tabernacle of God" will be removed

from *our* sacred camp and pitched afar off, as it was from sinning Israel at Sinai; or that the glory of the Lord will blaze about it only in anger, giving emphasis to the fatal and final sentence, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. Doubtless *ye* shall *not* come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein."

Brethren! let us look about us,

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time."

In all the march of the Dead Ages no such movements have ever startled human life. Swifter, sublimer than ever before, all things sweep "down the ringing grooves of change." Divine voices are swelling about us, loud as the noise of many waters. God is lifting up his ensign upon the mountains. The great trumpet of His providence has been blown. All the people of the land are summoned to see and hear. We can "be strong and work," if we can have the divine assurance, "I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." But that assurance is given only to those who will "go forth and teach the nations." Neglect the *heathen* and you cut the very sinews of your strength to succeed *any* where.

Never was there more apology for selfishness, nor more temptation to abandon the heathen world than at this moment. Our own wants and perils, as a nation, are appalling. Our young men are wasted by the ravages of war, or wanted to fill gaps in our grasping enterprise. Our candidates for the Gospel ministry are fast disappearing. Some of our largest Presbyteries have not one at this present time. Not long hence there will come an *exhaustion* of *men* suitable for the sacred office. Godly ministers have ever been the life of the Church. Let that life ebb away, and the very foundations of Christianity will be endangered. Our educational institutions need stimulating, speedily and powerfully.

Never was there such a call for religious literature and colportage. Amid the wildest storms of war, emigration is swelling over all our older settlements and pushing out into the wilderness. Great States, away toward the setting sun, are annually launching into being, with a civilization to be created and leavened with a pure Christianity, or they will rush into barbarism and carry us all down with them to swift destruction. Over this wide, unsettled border the Gospel must be carried in the knapsack and preached from house to house, or not at all. Colportage is the only hope of the wilderness. And now we have a million of readers in the Army and in the employ of the Government; away from home and all the ordinary means of religious instruction. You have heard their cry for books and papers, and have done something for their relief. Thousands and tens of thousands are languishing in hospitals, longing for health, or looking death in the face. Their quickened and restless minds need medicine as much as their bodies. Their imperiled *souls* need nursing quite as desperately as the enfeebled frame. We must send them good books and kind Christian friends, whose cheerful words and warm hearts will do more good than medicine.

And then, there is the great Home Missionary field, wider and more full of want to-day than at any moment, since the Mayflower was moored to Plymouth Rock. There are thousands of houseless churches struggling to build a tabernacle in the wilderness, that their feeble flocks may not be scattered, and all their labor be "in vain in the Lord." Without a house of worship, the Missionary *does* labor in vain. We ought to pour our treasures into these poor and sparse settlements, freely as the children of Israel did, for the "service of the work" of the tabernacle at Sinai.

Our poor Home Missionary brethren, holding on in great self-denial, lest they lose all they have gained—how shall we speak of their hardships, or express their claim for immediate

relief? Never, perhaps, since the settlement of the country, have the ministers of Christ had more to try their faith, especially in the destitute settlements. Instead of diminishing their aid, as our Boards have been obliged to do, it ought to be doubled or trebled without delay. And now very soon (may God grant) the whole Southern half of our territory will be thrown upon us; with its institutions all in ruins, its churches rent, its resources squandered and its stricken population enfeebled and embittered. This blasted realm must be recovered; this burnt desert re-peopled and freely watered, or that *Union* for which we have sacrificed so much, will, after all, be *impossible*. Our Home Missionary problem has unfolded to an awful sublimity. If, after all our treasure and blood for the establishment of the Government, we allow the people to sink into barbarism for lack of moral culture, we shall not *deserve* the freedom our swords have achieved; and we shall not *keep* it either!

Besides all this, just now, in the strange providence of God, six hundred thousand poor, half-heathen slaves have been cast helpless at our feet. Behind them are coming, in God's own good time, three millions more. Their fetters have been cut, and their exodus effected from the house of their bondage, in answer to our prayers. Oh, Brethren! there are not bayonets enough in our armies, nor spires enough on our churches, to avert the judgments of heaven, if we allow these trusting Freedmen to die unrelieved. They are houseless and homeless. They are hungry and in rags. They are, many of them, enfeebled by hardship and sinking under disease. Unless they are helped, effectually and soon, they will drop into ghastly graves, and their blood will cry to heaven from the very ground. We must not let them perish! The culture of the black race, social and spiritual, is the gravest problem of this new civilization which is bursting upon us. That culture must proceed from the North or from Europe. There will be no resources in the South, personal or pecuniary, to meet

this demand for a generation to come. We must certainly add it to the great weight of our obligations to "disciple all nations."

But what has this to do with Foreign Missions? "Much, every way." Do you think it demonstrates that all our resources are needed at home? It is precisely because some have drawn that inference and withheld their contributions from the Foreign Board, that I have stated the whole argument. Under the terrible pressure of the times, and the wail of our country's want, may we not relax our efforts for the distant Gentiles?

Brethren! In the fear of God, *I dare not do it*. Passing from our many and deep destitutions to the top of Tabor; putting our great cry of distress beside Christ's solemn command, I am afraid of offending him if we neglect the heathen. I fear that every dollar we subtract from the just claims of the perishing nations to be expended upon our own white and wasting harvest-field, will *blast* more than it blesses. I think I hear the angry rebukes of the great Husbandman: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Oh! if Christ be not with us, we labor and sacrifice to no purpose. Every duty we essay to do, every triumph we burn to achieve, depends decisively upon the presence of Christ among us.

Are we in want of ministers? Do you not know that every true priest is "called of God, as was Aaron?" Without the presence of Christ, no amount of education can ever make a minister. Our young men must be converted and filled with the love of souls before they are *fit candidates* for the *sacred office*. Without the presence of Christ with him, in vain does the colporteur thread the wilderness, and lift up his voice in the streets. In vain does the Builder "bring forth the top-stone of the temple, with shouting." All will be dark within. In vain does the spiritual Husbandman cast in the seed. Without Christ, his field will be dry

as Gilboa, where there was "no dew, nor rain, nor fields of offering."

We cannot get along without Christ. Our only hope for our imperiled civilization is the outpouring of the Spirit, and the cementing, healing, harmonizing influence of powerful revivals of religion. Without this, the child is yet to be born who will see the end of our troubles. The triumph of our arms I have never doubted. All can now see that it is very near. But the triumph of our religion, of Christian peace and confiding brotherhood, is more doubtful and much further off. That will depend upon the presence of Christ among us, and the outpouring of his Spirit upon our churches. Every good our heart or hope ever craved; every blessing in the present or in the future, for the individual or the nation, must depend upon the fulfillment of this great promise: "Lo! I am with you alway."

Brethren! have I read this promise aright? Does its fulfillment depend upon our obedience to the command: "Go teach all nations?" Then the money you give, the prayers you offer, the labor you bestow upon Foreign Missions, reacts most powerfully upon every interest, sacred, social and civil here at home.

This is the very key that unlocks the treasures of grace—the great covenant condition of every blessing which God confers—"I will be with you." That Presence is life and power. With it, our solemn assemblies sway and bend before the "rushing, mighty wind." The word sparkles with holy fire. Prayer and praise float as cloud-chariots to carry our beatified spirits up to the very throne of God. That Presence brooded over the old chaos and light shot through it; order and beauty arose upon the dead confusion, and this living creation, over which the morning stars sang together, sprang into vivid being and harmonious activity. That Presence penetrates the chaotic darkness and dismal ruin of a dead soul, and another creation, outrivaling the stellar spheres,

unfolds to the light of morning stars! Peace broods over the turbulent spirit. Hope, love, joy, burst as a moral sunlight; mercy, gentleness and compassion blossom on the spiritual landscape, sweeter than earth ever witnessed outside of Eden.

If Christ be with us, our war-clouds will roll into view a bow of promise, that no such destructive deluge shall ever afflict us again. Moral harvests shall cover our deep desolations quicker and greener than the fattened grass above our heroic graves. Bitterness shall melt into brotherhood, and all our hot strifes calm into Christian zeal and worthy emulation in cross-bearing for Christ's sake.

Oh, brethren! testify your belief in Jesus' veracity; express your valuation of his presence by what you are willing to do to "disciple the nations," and the promised redemption shall make haste. Increased enthusiasm in the missionary cause would carry a wave of health and vigor to our exhausted brethren who are doing our work in heathen lands. It would lift the weary "hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." It would give a more certain sound to the Gospel itself, even in Pagan ears, and swell the gladdening streams of purity and joy which are changing the face of the nations. These streams shall yet cover all the earth with verdure, and scatter summer glories over the thick glooms of sinful continents.

What we need is a great increase of volume. Like the type stream seen by the prophet issuing from the temple at Jerusalem, the Gospel should constantly gather depth and copiousness as it pushes out into the deserts of sin.

It will sink in the sand or evaporate in the hot air, unless we pour through the rugged channel constantly augmenting streams of saving influence, "To the ancles, to the knees, to the loins, waters to swim in—a river that cannot be passed over," is the symbol of those influences which are to recover the desert and heal the Dead Sea itself. Pour abroad the waters of life with such constant augmentation, and this barren and blasted world shall be transformed into a paradise.

Fadeless vegetation, all manner of fruits, sure and specific medicines, beauty, abundance and health—all bloom about these healing streams.

The Gospel enthusiastically published shall purify all the noxious institutions and governments of men, pour life through stagnant populations, and cause songs to break out on the heavy gloom of every dead human sea. The work has begun. Many a wilderness has already “blossomed as the rose.” Many a blasted heart has swelled and bloomed and borne precious fruit. Many a community has arisen to a new life and vigor. Over half the heathen world already has this stream rolled, washing the bloody temples of Paganism, quenching the fires on horrid altars, and refreshing thirsting, dying men in many a community. It has lifted whole nations from the debasement of the brute to the dignity of the sons of God. It has assuaged ferocious passions, silenced the clangor of arms, and swelled into life a thousand blessed charities. It shall have a glorious future! The missionary age has but just burst upon us. The ripe summer has hardly dawned. The songs of the reapers and the golden sheaves shall yet gladden a universal harvest-home.

He that sitteth on the throne has declared, “Behold, I make all things new”—new heavens and a new earth, new men and new emotions, a new world and a new destiny; till he shall look down from that throne and “see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;” till

“The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other; and the mountain tops,
From distant mountains, catch the flying joy;
Till nation after nation, taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosannah round.”

Brethren! this old song of hope and triumph has been set to new music. “Can ye not discern the signs of the times?” Can ye not read the significance of this new civilization which illumines our epoch? The world moves! The chariot of sal-

vation has made a sudden advance! The footsteps of Immanuel are majestic! Religious toleration in Turkey, the extinction of serfdom in Russia, the abolition of slavery in America! three continents awaking from the stupor of gloomy centuries; three powerful empires rising together and clapping their hands! The grand chorus of their music and motion is clearly this: "Peace on earth, and good will toward men." Yes, the world moves! the Church moves! the millennial morning "stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops." It shall never go back again to midnight. This is no night fire that counterfeits the dawn. It is the sun of righteousness. His broad disc clips the horizon; his arrowy beams scatter life and joy and sweet harvests through all the realms of moral night. We hail thee, O Sun! joy of the morning, herald of the day that shall never go down!

